

JOHN C. KNAPP.

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JUNE 14, 1898.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. MIERS, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 8952.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8952) granting an increase of pension to John C. Knapp, have examined the same and the evidence relating thereto and respectfully report:

This bill as amended proposes to increase from \$12 to \$20 per month the pension of John C. Knapp, of Palmer, Merrick County, Nebr.

This soldier served as private in Company K, Eighty-fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, from September 17, 1861, to June 27, 1865, when he was honorably discharged.

The records show that he was captured at Plymouth, N. C., April 20, 1864; paroled at Northeast Ferry, N. C., February 26, 1865; admitted to hospital, Annapolis, Md., March 5, 1865; furloughed April 3, 1865, for thirty days, date of return not stated; readmitted to hospital, division No. 2, May 11, 1865. The records of the hospital show that he was treated for acute diarrhea.

He filed and established a claim under the general law for "disease of digestive organs, result of prison life," and was pensioned therefor at \$6 from date of discharge, and \$8 from April 17, 1878, and was increased to \$12 from June 20, 1884, for "disease of digestive organs and resulting general debility, result of prison life," and that rate he is now receiving.

An application for increase, filed May 8, 1897, was rejected November 19, 1897, "No increase."

The board of examining surgeons at St. Paul, Nebr., where he was examined June 30, 1897, found no disease of digestive organs or hemorrhoids, or organic disease of heart, but rated him six-eighteenths for impairment of sight due to age, twelve-eighteenths for debility, six-eighteenths for defective memory, and two-eighteenths for enlargement of prostate.

The only disability rated which is conclusively shown to be due to service is debility, for which he was rated twelve-eighteenths—just what he is now receiving.

It is proved to the satisfaction of this committee that the soldier has disabilities of probable service origin that entitles him to a pension of at least \$20 per month, and as it is further shown that he is a citizen of good character and that he is very poor and needy and unable to earn a living by manual labor, your committee are of the opinion that an increase of this soldier's pension to \$20 per month is fully justified.

The bill is therefore reported back with the recommendation that it pass when amended as follows:

In line 4, after the word "roll," insert "subject to the provisions and limitations of the pension laws."

In lines 6 and 7 strike out the words "of fifty" and insert in lieu thereof the words "at the rate of twenty."

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill granting an increase of pension to John C. Knapp."

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In the matter of the application of John C. Knapp, late a member of Company K, Eighty-fifth Regiment New York Volunteer Infantry, for special pension.

On this 12th day of May, A. D. 1898, before me, a notary public, duly commissioned and qualified for and in the county of Merrick, in the State of Nebraska, personally came Martin V. Scott, aged 56 years, to me well and personally known, and entitled to full credit in all of his statements, who, after being duly sworn according to law, deposeeth and saith as follows, to wit:

My name is Martin V. Scott; my age is 56 years; my post-office address is Central City, Merrick County, Nebr. I was a member of Company A, Eighty-fifth New York Volunteer Infantry. Enlisted in said company in 1861 at Olean, N. Y., and served with and in said Company A for three years and ten months. I was well acquainted with above claimant, John C. Knapp, from boyhood, having been raised in the same neighborhood less than two miles apart, and in Cattaraugus County, N. Y., and have known said John C. Knapp almost continuously from that time until this. The only times of our not being closely together was during his imprisonment in Andersonville prison in April, 1864, at which time I had a brother captured and taken to Andersonville with said John C. Knapp; and again for about two years from 1871, when I moved to Nebraska before John C. Knapp also came to Nebraska.

I know that at the time of John C. Knapp's enlistment in Company K, Eighty-fifth New York Volunteer Infantry, he was a strong and able-bodied man, in apparent good health; was considered bright, and intellectually strong; was a school-teacher and was successful as a teacher, and appeared in full possession of all of his faculties until the time of his capture in April, 1864. I saw him on his return from Andersonville in June, 1865; he was then almost a skeleton, looked haggard and wild, and his appearance filled me with horror, and I can never forget the picture it made upon my mind and memory, and I can truthfully say that he has never recovered from that imprisonment. His body is weak, his mind is wandering and wavering, and while at times he may reason logically on some theme, yet when the theme is changed he is confused and seems lost. This affliction renders him unable to earn his livelihood by intellectual force, and his physical exhaustion renders him unable to earn his living by manual labor.

I know that financially he has no means to depend upon except a pension of \$12 a month, and owns no property. I know that the injuries caused by his imprisonment have made him incapable of taking care of his properties until they have all wasted away, including his homestead given to him by the Government. I make this affidavit of my own knowledge and without any suggestion or dictation from any person or persons whomsoever. I also swear that I am in no way interested in the prosecution of this claim.

MARTIN V. SCOTT.

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this 12th day of May, A. D. 1898; and I certify that I wrote said affidavit at the request and dictation of said affiant. Witness my hand official and notarial seal.

[SEAL.]

NEWLEN R. PERSINGER,  
Notary Public.

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STATE OF NEBRASKA, *County of Merrick:*

In the matter of the application of John C. Knapp, late a member of Company K, Eighty-fifth New York Infantry Volunteers, for a special pension.

On this 4th day of June, 1898, before me, a notary public, personally came W. J. Copeland, aged 67 years, residing at Palmer, Merrick County, Nebr., who, being duly sworn, declares in relation to the aforesaid case as follows:

I have known the applicant for the past twenty-four years and consider him a wreck mentally, and physically unfit to earn his living by manual labor or by intel-

lectual force. He has lost his homestead and has no home of his own or property of any kind, to my knowledge.

I further swear that I am in no way interested in the prosecution of this claim.

W. J. COPELAND.

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this 4th day of June, 1898.

[SEAL.]

J. L. DAVIS, *Notary Public*.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, *County of Merrick, ss:*

In the matter of the application of John C. Knapp, late a member of Company K, Eighty-fifth New York Infantry Volunteers, for a special pension.

On this 4th day of June, A. D. 1898, before me, a notary public, duly commissioned and qualified for and in the county of Merrick, in the State of Nebraska, personally came G. M. Burlingame, aged 54 years, residing at Palmer, in the county of Merrick and the State of Nebraska, who, being duly sworn, declares in relation to the aforesaid case as follows:

I have known John C. Knapp for nearly twenty-six years, and I consider him a physical and mental wreck, totally unfit to earn his living by manual labor or by intellectual force. He has lost his homestead given him by the Government and has no home or property of any kind, and I swear that I am in no way interested in the prosecution of this claim.

G. M. BURLINGAME.

Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before me this 4th day of June, A. D. 1898.  
Witness my hand and official and notarial seal.

[SEAL.]

W. J. COPELAND, *Notary Public*.

(Commission expires August 15, 1899.)

STATE OF NEW YORK, *Cattaraugus County, ss:*

In the matter of pension claim of John C. Knapp, of Company K, Eighty-fifth Regiment New York Volunteers.

Personally appeared before me, Spencer S. Peake, and who, being by me duly sworn, says in relation to the above-mentioned claim as follows:

I was second lieutenant Company K, Eighty-fifth Regiment New York Volunteers, I knew John C. Knapp from organization of said company. He served as private and corporal from September 17, 1861, to date of capture of said company, April 18, 1864. During said time John C. Knapp showed more than an average ability to endure the hardships of a soldier's life. He reenlisted in the field in same company and regiment on the 1st day of January, 1864, under the same officers who had known him from the beginning of his service; was as sound a man physically as we had in the company; he was strong, enduring, and active. His intellectual action was vigorous; his memory was clear and very retentive.

After his release from prison I met him at his home in Hinsdale, N. Y., in April, 1865. He had just come from the prisoners' hospital at Annapolis, Md. He was so changed as to make it difficult to believe he was the same man I had known so long, and had parted with the year before a robust man. He was so feeble he tottered and trembled as he walked. His voice was so weak he could only utter a few words without exhaustion.

His mental vigor seemed even worse wrecked than his physical. He seemed wholly unable of fixing his attention to any subject. He would forget what he was talking about, and could not remember matters with which he had been most familiar. He was one of only eleven of our company of forty-four who survived the hardships of prison life, and it had made of him so complete a wreck as to render his survival a doubtful blessing.

I saw him frequently up to and including 1871, and although he showed some slight improvement he still seemed to be hopelessly and permanently broken down; he had no vicious or immoral habits. I believe him to be a worthy man and entitled to all he asks.

I write this myself from memory, at Hinsdale, N. Y., this 24th May, 1898.

SPENCER S. PEAKE.

STATE OF NEW YORK, *County of Cattaraugus, ss:*

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 24th day of May, 1898.

I am in no way interested in said case, and am not concerned in its prosecution. Affiant is personally known to me, and is a credible witness.

G. H. BANDFIELD,  
*Notary Public*.

CENTRAL CITY, NEBR., May 19, 1898.

MY DEAR GEO. D.: I have seen and talked the matter of the mental and physical condition of John C. Knapp over with Dr. E. A. Benton, who has known and treated Knapp for several years, and our opinion of him is about as follows:

Physically he appears in good flesh, but is weak and vacillating in locomotion, using a cane to walk with, and in walking halts and jerks more than ordinary men do at his age—about 64; his flesh feels soft and flabby—not solid or springy—showing it is not of healthy texture; he is unfit for manual labor at all. This the Doctor gets from an examination of Mr. Knapp, and as to his mental condition it is difficult to describe. I have been well and intimately acquainted with Mr. Knapp for over twenty years; have often talked with him upon different themes, and have been surprised at the intelligence displayed in discussing subjects, but have always found that when the theme was changed he would appear lost and confused and as if in a dazed condition, not able to grasp the new thoughts presented by me, and sometimes, after a few moments, when attempting to resume the theme under conversation, it appeared to be gone from him entirely for some little time.

At other times his memory appeared wonderful, especially as regards historical reading, but in all of his conversation he had a halting way of talking, which at times becomes irksome and annoying to the listener, as though his mental action was sluggish and lacked good connective action. I have noticed within the past four or five years that there is a tendency with him to moroseness and despondency, and I can see that his mental powers, as well as physical, are affected by it. I have never known him to be addicted to any vicious habits that would tend to impair his faculties, but just the other way. His habits of life appear to be such as would best develop his faculties into good service, so that from his own sayings, and that of his comrades, we feel certain that his present condition is caused by his sufferings as a prisoner at Andersonville while in the Army. Financially he has no property except an equity in 80 acres of school land, which he tells me he is about to lose from inability to pay the interest due the State on his contract.

I am well satisfied that he is not shamming, but is honest in his claims, and I also think that his inability to get his just claims properly recognized by the Government, together with his physical and mental weakness, is one of the chief causes of his moroseness and despondency.

I feel sure that a physical examination by competent physicians will verify all the statements I have made, and show plainly that both physically and mentally he is unable to do manual or mental labor necessary to provide for his daily needs and the needs of his dependent family. I know that your personal knowledge of him for a good many years will verify my statements, only that his condition is worse than when you knew him, aggravated by age and privation and discouragement.

Hoping you will find in this what you wished from me, and that you may find yourself able to aid our friend and comrade,

I am, truly, yours,

N. R. PERSINGER.

[Indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY,  
May 23, 1898.

Respectfully referred to the chairman Committee on Invalid Pensions, House of Representatives, inviting attention to the within statement of the mental and physical condition of John C. Knapp, whose relief is sought through a bill now pending before your committee.

I am thoroughly acquainted with the condition of Mr. Knapp, and am therefore in a position to heartily corroborate the within statements, which are true in all respects, and correctly present to your committee the needy and deserving character of the applicant.

G. D. MEIKLEJOHN,  
Assistant Secretary of War.